

AMERICAN FORK CANYON

When Mother Nature distributed her mineral wealth, Utah was not forgotten. Under date of April 6, 1871, the following item appeared in the *Deseret News*: "The fact is unquestionably demonstrated that rich mines are in abundance in *American Fork Canyon*. A great amount of ore is already on the dump. C. B. Hawley is rearing a sawmill and two portable ones are coming. These, with those in successful operation, will supply lumber and shingles sufficient to supply the demand. Houtz and Farnsworth are located at the mouth of the canyon with ample provisions for man and beast. The snow is fast disappearing. A company is organized to build a road on short notice and American Fork is destined to become a great place."

tum, with a brakeman on board to regulate the speed. During the last years of operation mules were used in place of the locomotive. Among the operators of this road were Billy Ray, engineer; Warren B. Smith, Thomas Worthington, Ebenezer Hunter and Francis Smailes. Gradually the rich ore supply in the Miller Mine diminished and the railroad proved to be an unprofitable adventure. The tracks were torn up in 1878. When the Miller Mine was in its glory, other mines opened up including the Whirlwind, Yankee, Pittsburg and several others, but none proved as profitable as the Miller Mine.

About 1905 George Tyng secured a lease from the Aspinwall Company in another location on Miller Hill and another rich ore body was uncovered. This brought about a renewed boom in American Fork Canyon and many new claims were developed.

The following article was written for the Mineral Survey by Gail Martin:

On a gently sloping grassy bench high above the crystal torrent racing and foaming at the head of American Fork Canyon stands a picket fence. Pyramidal shaped Miller Hill looks down on this plot of ground, and the buildings of a once thriving and prosperous camp muse somberly throughout the long uneventful years over a scene of mountain beauty, that, for eyes tired with the mediocrity and unimaginative conventionality of town and city, possesses a rare and magic healing power.

Within the picket fence is a grave and within the grave lies the body of a man known to the oldtimers as "Old Man" Tyng. No headstone marks the grave. The wind has broken several pickets off the fence, and though the grave carries no name and "Old Man" Tyng's initials and given name may have been forgotten and the title

"Old Man" substituted to supply the need, the story of his life and deeds will be remembered as long as any mining is done in American Fork Canyon and long after legend will tell the tale of that rare soul who chose to be buried in this lonesome but heavenly spot.

The story of American Fork cannot be told without starting with the story of George Tyng. His revival of activity at Miller Hill in 1905 completes the link between the picturesque bonanza days of 1870 and the work now being done just across the ridge in Mary Ellen Gulch at the Yankee Mines by the American Smelting and Refining Company. The discovery of the rich Tyng bonanza is one of the most romantic of stories centering around old western mines.

After an adventurous career in east and south, Mr. Tyng was sent to Utah to look after the interests of the New York group owning the Miller Hill mine, the first mine to be opened up in American Fork Canyon. Mr. Tyng came to Miller Hill, he saw and was conquered. He not only believed that a mine could be opened up but he fell in love with this region, the beauty of it, a glimpse of which cannot but make the heart soar with lofty joy and inspiration.

Ore of exceeding high-grade had been taken out on the other side of the mountain. Mr. Tyng reasoned that the rich bedded deposit continued through the mountain to the northeast side. In fact, some ore had been mined on that side but the drop in the price of silver and a fault, which truncated the rich ore body, stopped operation years before his arrival.

After securing a lease on the property Mr. Tyng started drifting to find the faulted orebody. Work was carried on at heavy expense. The long haul up American Fork Canyon over steep and narrow roads and the more difficult haul up from the Dutchman Flat to the Tyng camp at Miller Hill at an elevation near 9500 feet complicated matters. There was also the peril of snowslides and the long, cold winters.

The Tyng funds dwindled fast. Francis Tyng, now a Major in the United States Army, and his brother, Charles, had come to Utah to help their father. Major Tyng, who for a few years was stationed at Fort Douglas, once told the writer that the Tyng orebody was found only by the merest chance. Every chance of financing exploration had been exhausted and work was to be stopped. Before going down to American Fork for the last payroll, the foreman of the mine, John H. Howes, drew Mr. Tyng aside and asked permission to put a shot or two in a seam of iron showing on one side of the tunnel. "Go ahead," replied Mr. Tyng, "It can't do any harm."

Mr. Tyng went to American Fork. On his return to the mine, a day or so afterward, to pay off the men and close the mine, he found that the Miller Hill was no longer a forlorn hope, but a real mine. The chance shot had opened up a big breast of high-grade carbonate ore and the Tyng fortune was made.

Miller Hill activity boomed. Old Man Tyng, always a liberal spender and a generous employer, built one of the finest boarding houses in the country looking out over a scene of wild and rugged grandeur. Forty teams were kept busy hauling ore and supplies. Thirty men were employed on a shift. None but the best cooks were employed in the boarding house, and the meals at the Tyng boarding house were a treat for a king.

At the height of this prosperity "Old Man" Tyng was killed in a snowslide as the result of a cruel and unexpected accident. He had stepped from his cabin to one of the out-buildings and while there a slide passed over the building. According to the story no great amount of property damage was done but a nail in one of the roof boards had been driven by the snow passing over the building into Mr. Tyng's skull, killing him instantly.

The body was hauled by sleigh to American Fork and embalmed. On opening Mr. Tyng's will, there he requested that he be buried just below the boarding house on the brow of the hill, where each night in the summer and fall, he had smoked his pipe and watched the setting sun achieve new glories in light and color on the distant hills.

Breaking the road back to the mine with the body, a distance of twenty or more miles was a heart breaking task. The trip up the mountain took eight teams. Deep snow was cleared off the hill and a grave dug by the miners and there "Old Man" Tyng found his resting place.

Under the management of the Tyng Brothers, the Miller Hill prospered. The orebody found by the chance shot in the iron seam was probably after the Miller orebody, found on the southwest side of the hill in 1870, the richest and largest deposit found in American Fork canyon.

Miners, who worked in the property, still like to reminisce concerning its size and richness. Gold values ran about \$20 a ton for the entire tonnage. In addition the ore carried 22 ounces of silver to the ton and around 40 per cent lead with 5 per cent zinc and 20 per cent iron.

When Miller Hill activity was at its height, Theodore Nicholes of Am. Fork worked in one of the main carbonate stopes, where breast boards had to be placed between square sets to keep the ore from running and closing up the stope. In a stope of this kind, according to Mr. Nicholes, no blasting nor picking nor shoveling was necessary. The ore ran so freely that a rope was put down the stope to the tunnel below, down which the miner could slide like fireman answering an alarm and escape from the stope should it be impossible to hold the rich, sandlike mineral. In ore of this kind two men could sack 350 sacks of ore daily. Grade would run about 40 ounces of silver to the ton and 40 per cent lead.—Ann Hansen

FOREST CITY

Forest City at the head of American Fork Canyon during the seventies was a thriving mining community of some 150 people. While the place was designated as a city, (from facts obtainable,) it is not likely that it had any kind of city government. A lady teacher from Salt Lake City maintained a school for some time for a rather limited number of children.

Worthy Nash operated a saw mill and supplied mining timber. He also kept a small herd of dairy cows and supplied the camp with fresh milk and butter.

Frank Birk maintained a saloon and was an important character in the community. The saloon was well patronized and a considerable amount of the money realized from the labor of the men passed into Birk's hands. During this time, many ties were gotten out, which had to be hewn on two sides by means of an axe or adz. They were hauled by mule team from Forest City to Deer Creek and loaded on the train to be sold in American Fork. Many of the ties came into Birk's possession in exchange for liquor.

Several mines were being worked at this time, among them the Dutchman and Mary Ellen. Forest City was by the Mary Ellen Gulch, south of the Dutchman. On the east side was a large flat, later known as Grave Yard Flat. At least forty people were buried there, some Indians as well as white people. There were no resident doctors, and in case of childbirth, other sickness or accidents, considerable trouble was experienced in getting medical aid from American Fork. An epidemic of scarlet fever broke out in the camp, many children died as no help was available.—George F. Shelley

TIMPANOGOS CAVE

Martin Hansen, a pioneer of 1861 used to haul logs from the canyon and sell them for homes. It was while cutting wood and exploring around the mountains that he discovered a cave; was later called the Hansen cave. This was a beautiful cave; many people climbed up to see it, although the climbing was very difficult. There were no restrictions against taking souvenirs at that time and those going to see the cave would take pieces of it for souvenirs, thus destroying the beauty of it. Two other caves were discovered later close by the Hansen Cave, these three have been connected to form what is now the Timpanogos Cave National Monument. It was designated a national monument October 14, 1922. Sunday October 14, 1956 was the 34th birthday of the Timpanogos Cave National Monument in American Fork Canyon. Several of those who discovered portions of the cave and descendants of Martin Hansen were invited as special guests. There was no special program Sunday, but all who visited the national monument were asked to sign the registration book at the foot of the cave trail. 30,800 persons representing

412 = every State in USA + 28 Foreign Countries had visited the monument during 1956 — Ann C Hansen